

RESOLUTION NO. _____, SERIES 2010

**A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DOROTHY IRENE
HEIGHT, NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER**

Sponsored By: Council Members Cheri Bryant Hamilton, Mary C. Woolridge,
Judith Green, and Barbara Shanklin

Whereas, Dorothy Irene Height, born March 24, 1912, in Richmond, VA to James and Fannie Burroughs Height, was a quiet, often unheralded heroine of both the Civil Rights and Women's Movements in America, working tirelessly for the constitutional, economic, social, and human rights of all women in America and for persons of African descent, her activities spanning from anti-lynching protests in the early 1930's when she marched as a teenager in New York's Times Square shouting "Stop the lynching," to the inauguration in 2009 of President Barack Obama, who called her "the godmother of the civil rights movement and a hero to so many Americans;" and

Whereas, Dorothy Irene Height, with earned Bachelor and Master's degrees from NY University, was also awarded three dozen honorary Doctorate degrees from such institutions as Tuskegee, Harvard, and Princeton Universities, and an honorary Bachelor's degree from Barnard College in 2004, 75 years after that institution had accepted, and then denied her admission, because its racial quota of 2 black women had been met for that year; and received two of the nation's most prestigious civilian awards: the Presidential Medal of Freedom awarded by President Bill Clinton in 1994, and the Congressional Gold Medal, awarded by President George W. Bush in 2004; and

Whereas, Dorothy Irene Height gave unselfishly of her time and energies helping to lift poor people from poverty, including the following projects: in the late 1930's, as executive director of the Harlem Y.W.C.A., she brought attention to black women working as domestics

for white women in “slave markets” making 15 cents an hour; in the mid 60’s she initiated programs in the Deep South such as “pig banks” which supplied poor rural families with a pig to help them raise their own livestock; and instituted programs called “Wednesdays in Mississippi” which brought black and white women from the North to meet their Southern counterparts in Mississippi in an effort to ease racial tensions and bridge differences; she served the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) as President for four decades, remaining its president *emerita* until her death, throughout which time she fought for women’s rights to equal pay and education, and was honored on her 90th birthday with payoff of the mortgage on the NCNW headquarters on Pennsylvania Ave one block from the White House; and as the *grande dame* of the Delta Sigma Theta, an international sorority of black women, she served as its President from 1947 until 1956; and

Whereas, Dorothy Irene Height sat with and strategized with the “Big 6,” the so-called giants of the civil rights movement of the 50’s and 60’s, namely: the Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, John Lewis, A. Phillip Randolph, Roy Wilkins and Whitney M. Young, Jr., she was most often portrayed as inaudible and invisible by the media, but being the good-spirited humanitarian that she was, she kept working undeterred, good-naturedly stating that “this was her life’s work, not a job,” and that “the task at hand was far less about personal limelight than it was about collective struggle;“ and

Whereas, Dorothy Irene Height, who never married and had no offspring, departed this life on April 20, 2010, and will be missed for her unmitigated dedication, wry wit, elegant grace, and colorful hats, she leaves a host of people, including presidents, heads of nations, dignitaries at home and abroad, as well as countless friends, colleagues, and admirers to remember her legacy; and

Whereas, Dorothy Irene Height's influence extended to and inspired untold numbers of people in the Louisville/Jefferson County community to be and do their best, striving always for justice, she is unequivocally entitled to be memorialized by the governing body of this community; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT (THE COUNCIL) AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I: That Dorothy Irene Height is hereby recognized by the Council as an exemplification of an outstanding leader among citizens of the world, and shall serve as a model for the Council as it endeavors to protect the civil rights and economic opportunities of its citizenry for the betterment of this community.

SECTION II. This Resolution shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

Kathleen J. Herron
Metro Council Clerk

Thomas L. Owen
President of the Council

Jerry E. Abramson
Mayor

Approval Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Michael J O'Connell
Jefferson County Attorney

BY: _____
G:Resolution Dorothy I Height, Draft-1acb/ROC 04.21.2010